

Dewch i
siarad RhCT
Let's talk
RCT



Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

February 2024

Let's Talk Equalities



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the Let's Talk Equalities consultation carried out in 2023/ 2024.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from 12th December 2023 to 9th February 2024.
- The purpose of the consultation was to gather the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders on Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Draft Strategic Equality Plan, prepared in 2023.
- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders (described more fully in Section 3, Methodology):
 - Online survey and "Ideas Board" via the Let's Talk Equalities website
 - Invitations to respond were sent to multiple stakeholders/ groups
 - Development of an Easy Read format document that was circulated
 - Attendance and engagement at multiple community and advocacy group meetings for direct feedback
 - Engagement via multiple staff events and groups
- 90 survey responses were received
- 5 ideas were posted to the online board
- Feedback was also received via email and through various engagement activities. These are available in a confidential appendix for officers.
- Over 400 people were engaged in this consultation

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Equalities consultation 2023/2024.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results from the consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Equalities website.

Appendix 1 containing the full text of all comments received in the online consultation and Appendix 2 containing feedback via other routes can be viewed separately and is available for Cabinet and Officers to view.

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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Our Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and how we will meet legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, known as the Wales Specific Equality Duties require public bodies to publish equality objectives every 4 years. The equality objectives can be contained a Strategic Equality Plan.
- 2.3 The aim of these duties is to enable better performance of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.4 Whilst there is no statutory direction on the what protected characteristics the SEP should cover, apart for the need for focus on Gender Pay, it is generally established that objectives should in some way cover all of the protected characteristics contained in the Equality Action 2010, which are:
- age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation.
- 2.5 In advance of presenting to Cabinet, we wished to consult with stakeholders including staff, members of the public, advocacy and support groups and community groups for feedback on the Draft Strategic Equality Plan.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Let's Talk Equalities project was conducted in-house and the consultation ran from the 12th December 2023 to 9th February 2024. This report presents the results from the project run on the Let's Talk website. This report will be presented to Cabinet and Officers to consider the feedback received.
- 3.2 The consultation approach used the [Let's Talk](#) online engagement platform, which provides a user friendly and interactive form of engagement. Engagement tools used in this consultation included a short survey (focused on the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft Strategic Equality Plan) and an online "Ideas Board" which allows respondents to post open suggestions for improvement and comment on ideas posted by others.
- 3.3 The online engagement was promoted in a number of ways and across a number of channels, including social media. Direct emails to stakeholders including Stonewall, Tai Pawb, Fighting for Pride, People First, Race Alliance Wales, Wales Council for the Deaf, Interlink, Cwm Taf Community Cohesion Group, Elected Members and Town & Community Councils were circulated with an invitation to feed back on the Draft Strategic Equalities Plan either directly or via the website. Posters advertising the consultation and the Draft SEP were displayed in community venues including YMa, Libraries, Leisure Centres etc.
- 3.4 Engagement with staff also included information via email (global internal email updates, all staff networks, YEPs Equality Group, BAME Education Group, schools, unions, front-line managers, Senior and Chief officers) and direct engagement through online Equality Clinic events. Posters were also displayed at staff sites including Occupational Health, Vision Produce and depots.
- 3.5 All posters and emails were presented in both Welsh and English, and there are both Welsh and English versions of Let's Talk (Dewch i Siarad) available.
- 3.6 Staff also lead direct engagement at a number of community meetings including Disability Forum, Valleys Veterans, Taff Ely Veterans, Innovate, Valley Ethnic Minority Support Group.

4 LET'S TALK EQUALITIES

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the main consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Equalities website.

In total there were 521 visits to the Let's Talk Equalities page, of which 336 visitors were Aware (meaning the page was viewed), 217 were Informed (meaning they viewed multiple pages and/ or opened files, downloaded documents etc.) and 95 Engaged (meaning they took part in one of the engagement tools on the page). The majority of page traffic came via direct links.

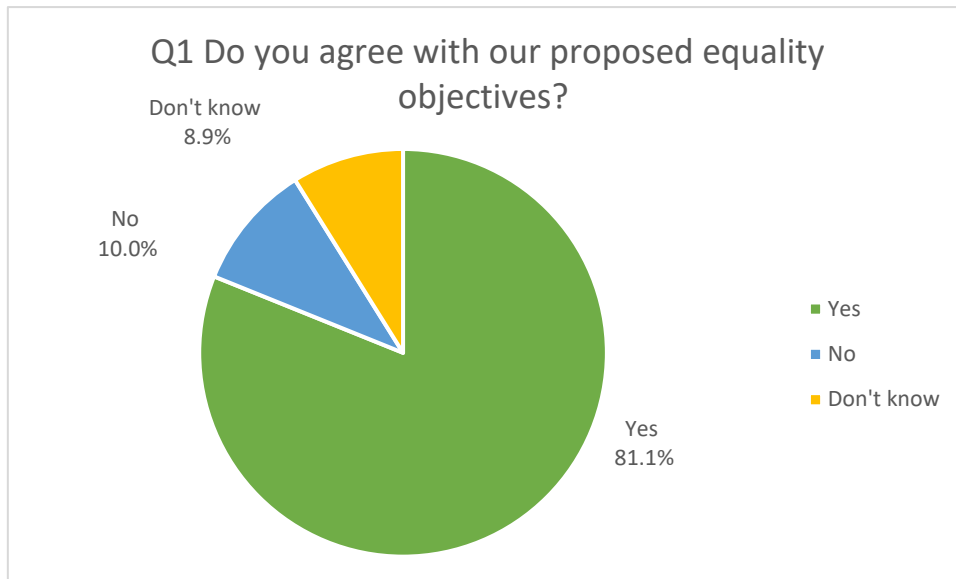
- 4.2 There were two ways for page visitors to engage with the consultation. Firstly, the full survey, which posed three questions about the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft Strategic Equality Plan as well as an open comment question for any other suggestions. Secondly, an online "Ideas Board" which allowed respondents to post suggestions and comment on suggestions made by others. The survey could be filled in without any registration, but the Ideas Board required at least an email address to be able to post – email addresses are not made public, however.

Survey Results

- 4.3 Respondents were asked to read the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft SEP before completing the survey. A total of 90 completed surveys were received. For the purposes of this report, any blank responses to individual questions have been discounted. Therefore, all percentages quoted are a percentage of the total responses for that individual question.

- 4.4 **Question 1: Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?**

81.1% of respondents (73) stated that they agree with the proposed objectives. 10.0% (9) stated that they did not agree, and 8.9% (8) stated that they did not know whether they agreed or not.



Q1 Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?	Count	%
Yes	73	81.1%
No	9	10.0%
Don't know	8	8.9%
<i>Text responses</i>	8	

Figure 1: Q1 Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?

4.5 Respondents who selected “No” were asked to explain why. 8 comments were received, expressing views including a perceived unfair bias in favour of people with protected characteristics, concerns that experience and qualifications are overlooked in favour of demographic considerations and a lack of consideration in the objectives for unpaid carers.

Quotes include:

Everybody should be treated the same, treating some groups differently for whatever reason is unfair

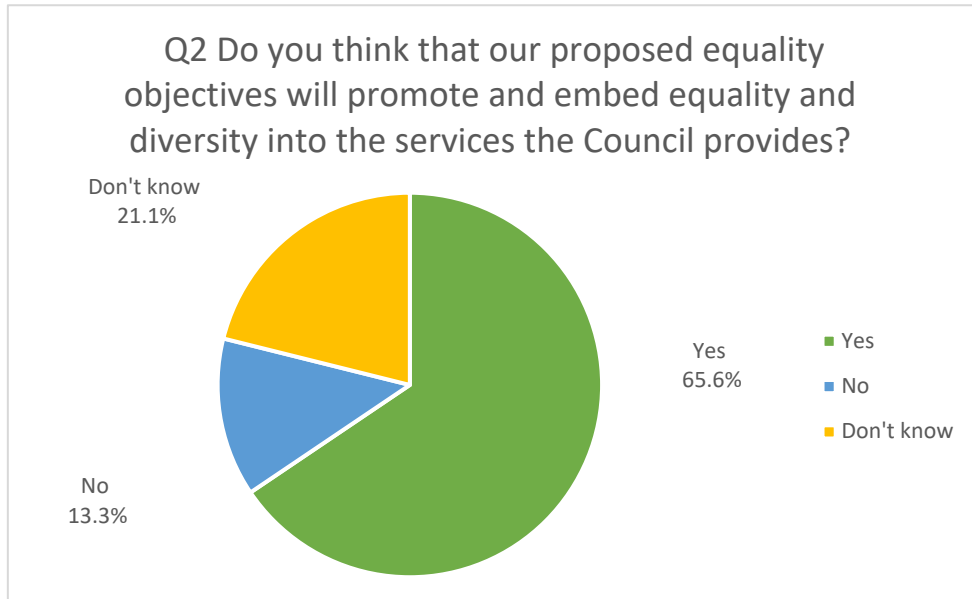
I am disappointed that unpaid carers, including our working staff who are unpaid carers, are not mentioned or referenced in any of the objectives.

The council needs to focus on providing basic services cost efficiently not playing identity politics which serve to divide the public.

4.6 **Question 2: Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?**

65.6% of respondents (59) stated that they believe the proposed objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into Council services. 13.3% of

respondents (12) stated that they do not believe this to be the case and 21.1% (19) stated that they did not know either way.



Q2 Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?	Count	%
Yes	59	65.6%
No	12	13.3%
Don't know	19	21.1%
Text responses	11	

Figure 2: Q2 Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?

4.7 Respondents who selected “No” were asked to explain why. 11 responses were received, many of which repeat the concerns from the previous question. Additionally, some comments raise concerns about the practical implementation of the stated objectives during times of financial and resource constraints, and other comments listed personal experiences that respondents felt the objectives will not address.

Quotes include:

RCT has failed in recent times for certain demographics of people who were linked within the council. In 2023 alone, they resulted in RCT Pride disbanding due to the Pontypridd Pride event being cancelled

There is little capacity to prioritise this in addition to other requirements placed on managers already

It needs to be something everyone believes in and part of. Not all staff will get to see or feel part of this until someone take the time to devolve the information to all staff.

4.8 Question 3: Do you think that it is important for our proposed equality objectives to focus on developing our workforce?

80.0% of respondents (72) stated agreement that it is important for the proposed objectives to focus on workforce development. Equal numbers (9, or 10.0%) stated disagreement or that they did not know.

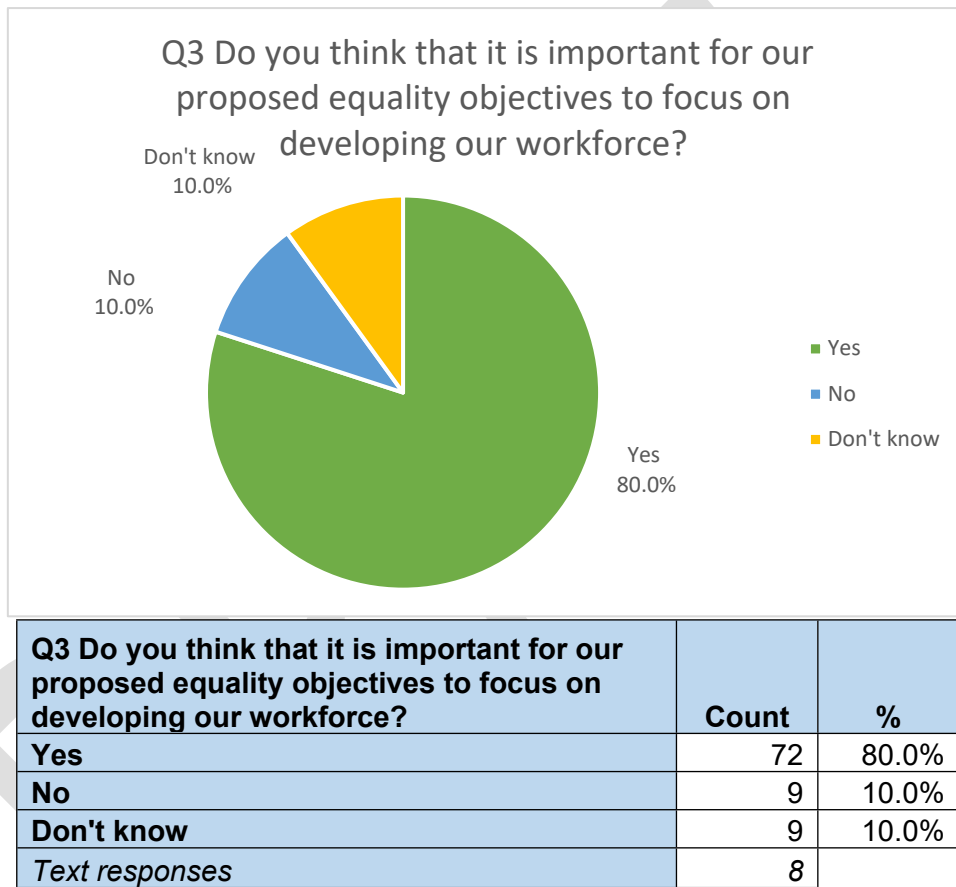


Figure 3: Q3 Do you think that it is important for our proposed equality objectives to focus on developing our workforce?

4.9 Respondents who selected “No” were asked to explain why. 8 comments were received, with themes including the view that there should be more focus on communities, that experience and long service should be rewarded with progression and that money spent on this work could be used elsewhere.

Quotes include:

This work is costing money and during a period in our lives when the council is cutting services to save money, this is zero priority.

There is no room for advancement through experience/time spent in the job.

The workforce would develop naturally if more work was done in communities (given most of the workforce lives IN THOSE COMMUNITIES)

4.10 Question 4: Do you have any other comments about the proposed Strategic Equality Plan?

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments they would like to make. A total of 38 comments were received for this question, and as well as building upon the themes already raised previously these comments included:

Support for the proposals

Overall, the plan feels thought out, evidence-based and seems to have strong rationale

Nothing to add, I feel that the STP is well written and sets out clear achievable objectives.

Satisfying the public and workforce needs, Really important and a great plan

Concerns about vague commitments

it sounds a bit vague and I'm not sure I can support it fully without real targets and promises

It is very wishy-washy

It doesn't say what you are going to do

Questions and comments regarding implementation

It would be great to also have some additional manager guidance on recruiting from a diversity perspective, for example in terms of recruitment advertising

I feel in order to create inclusive and supportive workplaces this plan needs to cover elements of equality and diversity that aren't strictly speaking covered by legislation, such as unpaid caring responsibilities.

The Strategic Equality Plan needs to be shared across the whole of the council and not just the office based workforce. The staff not based in offices feel they have no voice in some aspects of what the council do or are providing.

Other criticisms

Seems a little to involved and timely both to set up so far and looking at the requiremntns going forward, when we could focus on our work

Just stop. It's good to be different but don't make that the main driving force in everything.

There is too much reporting on meeting targets or complying with needless legislation.

A number of comments also raised specific examples and personal stories related to EDI, or provided specific technical commentary on aspects of the Draft SEP or Equality Objectives. These, and all comments received in this survey, are available in a separate appendix for officers to read.

Ideas Board

- 4.11 A total of 5 ideas were posted to the online board, from 4 users. There was 1 comment made in response.

Share your ideas

about 2 months ago

Do you have any ideas that would help us reduce inequalities in the workplace and in our communities?

The screenshot shows an 'Ideas Board' with a central 'Add your idea' button. To the right, five idea cards are displayed in a grid. Each card features a user profile picture (lightbulb icon), a timestamp ('about 2 months ago'), a title, a description, and a comment/like count at the bottom.

Idea Title	Description	Comments	Likes
Dropped Curbs	These are important and the council could speed up response times to these	1	0
Go beyond the usual media channels when advertising vacancies	Take the adverts to the places where particular communities congregate, especially if wanting to win trust and so	0	0
Support for unpaid carers	Continue the Carers Caffi peer support group, allow Carers Leave to be taken in hours rather than as a half day minimum, improve line managers understanding of	0	0
Organise community events that focus on different aspects of communities e.g. International day to celebrate ethnic makeup of RCT.		0	0
Progression	The council could more efficiently share our progression on products with members of the public.	0	1

Figure 4: Ideas Board - Do you have any ideas that would help us reduce inequalities in the workplace and in our communities?

4.12 The full text of these comments is available in an appendix for officers to view.

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